

Sūrah 85

Al-Burūj

(The Castles)

(Makkan Period)

Title

The *Sūrah*'s opening word, *al-burūj* forms its title.

Period of Revelation

Internal evidence suggests that this *Sūrah* was revealed when the Makkan unbelievers' persecution of the Muslims was at its peak. By inflicting all sorts of torture, they tried to compel the Muslims into reverting to their ancestral faith.

Subject Matter and Themes

One of the objectives of this *Sūrah* is to warn the unbelievers against the terrible consequences of their persecution of the believers. Likewise, the believers are consoled that their steadfastness will bring them the best rewards and that Allah will avenge them by punishing the unbelievers.

So as to press home the above, the story of the People of the Pit is first related. They too, had hurled the believers into pits of

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fire. By means of this story, some lessons are imparted to both the believers and unbelievers alike. In this respect, just like the People of the Pit, the unbelieving Makkan chiefs too will incur Allah's wrath and punishment. Moreover, in the manner of those believers of yore, the Muslims too, should not deviate from faith. Those believers preferred faith, there prepared to be hurled into pits of fire, abounding in fuel. Moreover, notwithstanding the unbelievers' detestation, Allah is Supreme, the Most Mighty, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He deserves all praise. He witnesses the conduct of both the Muslims and Makkan unbelievers. It is, therefore, certain that the unbelievers will be consigned to the Hellfire for their unbelief. They will be subjected to further punishment in Hellfire as a recompense for their persecution of the believers. Equally definite is that the believers with good deeds to their credit will be blessed with Paradise, which constitutes supreme triumph. The unbelievers are threatened with Allah's stern grip. If they entertain delusions of grandeur, they should know that Pharaoh and Thamūd too, boasted of their huge armies. They should better take a lesson from the terrible ends met by those armies. Allah's power and might surrounds them, and from which they can never escape. The Qur'ān, which they call a lie, is the ultimate truth. It is inscribed on a well-guarded tablet, which cannot be altered by anyone.